

**Preliminary Amendment of U.S. National Stage for International Application  
PCT/EP03/05598 filed May 28, 2003**

**In the Claims:**

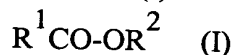
Please cancel claims 1-9, without prejudice, and add new claims 10-24, in accordance with the following complete listing of all claims ever presented. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the instant application:

Claims 1-9 (Canceled)

Claim 10 (New): A process comprising:

- (a) subjecting a conjugated linoleic acid lower alkyl ester to hydrolysis in the presence of an enzyme to form a hydrolyzate comprising a conjugated linoleic acid and a lower alkanol, wherein at least a portion of the lower alkanol is continuously removed;
- (b) separating the hydrolyzate into an organic phase and an aqueous/alcoholic phase; and
- (c) separating the conjugated linoleic acid from the organic phase.

Claim 11 (New): The process according to claim 10, wherein the conjugated linoleic acid corresponds to the general formula (I):



wherein  $R^1CO$  represents a linoleic acid acyl group having conjugated double bonds and  $R^2$  represents an alkyl group having from 1 to 4 carbons.

Claim 12 (New): The process according to claim 10, wherein the enzyme comprises a compound selected from the group consisting of esterases, lipases and mixtures thereof.

Claim 13 (New): The process according to claim 10, wherein the enzyme comprises at least one microorganism selected from the group consisting of *Alcaligenes*., *Aspergillus niger*, *Candida antarctica A*, *Candida antarctica B*, *Candida cylindracea*, *Chromobacterium viscosum*, *Rhizomucor miehei*, *Penicilium camemberti*, *Penicilium*

**Preliminary Amendment of U.S. National Stage for International Application  
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*roqueforti*, *Porcine pancreas*, *Pseudomonas cepacia*, *Pseudomonas fluorescens*, *Rhizopus javanicus*, *Rhizopus oryzae*, and *Thermomyces lanuginosus*.

Claim 14 (New): The process according to claim 11, wherein the enzyme comprises at least one microorganism selected from the group consisting of *Alcaligenes*., *Aspergillus niger*, *Candida antarctica A*, *Candida antarctica B*, *Candida cylindracea*, *Chromobacterium viscosum*, *Rhizomucor miehei*, *Penicilium camemberti*, *Penicilium roqueforti*, *Porcine pancreas*, *Pseudomonas cepacia*, *Pseudomonas fluorescens*, *Rhizopus javanicus*, *Rhizopus oryzae*, and *Thermomyces lanuginosus*.

Claim 15 (New): The process according to claim 10, wherein the enzyme comprises at least one microorganism selected from the group consisting of *Candida antarctica B*, *Chromobacterium viscosum*, and *Thermomyces lanuginosus*.

Claim 16 (New): The process according to claim 11, wherein the enzyme comprises at least one microorganism selected from the group consisting of *Candida antarctica B*, *Chromobacterium viscosum*, and *Thermomyces lanuginosus*.

Claim 17 (New): The process according to claim 10, wherein the hydrolysis is carried out at a temperature of from 20 to 80°C.

Claim 18 (New): The process according to claim 11, wherein the hydrolysis is carried out at a temperature of from 20 to 80°C.

Claim 19 (New): The process according to claim 15, wherein the hydrolysis is carried out at a temperature of from 20 to 80°C.

Claim 20 (New): The process according to claim 16, wherein the hydrolysis is carried out at a temperature of from 20 to 80°C.

**Preliminary Amendment of U.S. National Stage for International Application  
PCT/EP03/05598 filed May 28, 2003**

Claim 21 (New): The process according to claim 10, wherein the hydrolysis is carried out to a conversion of at least 60% by weight.

Claim 22 (New): The process according to claim 10, wherein a constant water content of from 30 to 70% by weight is maintained during the hydrolysis and at least a portion of the water/lower alkanol phase is continuously removed by application of a vacuum of from 20 to  $60 \pm 5$  mbar.

Claim 23 (New): The process according to claim 10, wherein water content is adjusted to from 0 to 20% by weight during the hydrolysis and at least a portion of the water/lower alkanol phase is continuously removed by application of a vacuum of from 20 to  $60 \pm 5$  mbar.

Claim 24 (New): The process according to claim 10, wherein the hydrolysis is carried out in two or more stages and a water content of from 50 to 75% by weight is used in each stage.